

Message Text

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66

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 /079 W

----- 016322

R 311725Z MAY 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2048

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L B A G H D A D 0 5 8 9

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN-IRAQI CONFLICT

REF: BAGHDAD 561

1. FOREIGN OBSERVERS IN BAGHDAD CONTINUE TO BE PERPLEXED ABOUT SYRIAN MOTIVES FOR MISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST IRAQ AND WITHOLDING OF EUPHRATES WATERS. IRAQ CONTINUES ALMOST COMPLETE BAN ON ANTI-SYRIAN PROPAGANDA AND, ACCORDING TO BRITISH MILATT, HAVE NOT RPT NOT CONCENTRATED ANY MILITARY UNITS ALONG SYRIAN BORDER. EXCEPTION TO PROPAGANDA BAN WAS IRAQI DENIAL MAY 30 OF SYRIAN REPORT OF ATTACK ON SYRIAN MILATT. SYRIA ACCUSED OF INVENTING SUCH FABRICATIONS TO DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM ITS POSITION ON EUPHRATES.

2. RE ALLEGED BAGHDAD EXECUTIONS (PARA 5 REFTEL), EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR CHECKED OUT NAMES ON LIST AND TOLD ME THEY WERE EITHER UNKNOWN OR EXECUTED ONE TO FIVE YEARS AGO.

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3. THERE IS GROWING CONVICTION AMONG IRAQIS THAT SOVIETS
ARE ENCOURAGING SYRIA TO
PUNISH IRAQ BY WITHHOLDING WATER
OR, AT MINIMUM, TACITLY AGREEING TO IT WHICH, IN IRAQI EYES,
AMOUNT TO SAME THING. THIS VIEW GIVEN CREDENCE BY
SYRIAN EXTENSION OF UN FORCE FOR SIX MONTHS WHICH IS SEEN
HERE AS HAVING BEEN DONE AT BEHEST OF SOVIETS AND AGAINST
WISHES OF SADAT. THERE ARE MANY MORE SPECULATIVE TYPE
EXPLANATIONS FOR CURRENT CONFLICT, BUT MOST REASONABLE ONE
APPEARS TO BE, AS STATED DAMASCUS 1808, THAT ASAD REGIME
FEELS THREATENED AND IS TRYING TO DISCOURAGE IRAQI INTER-
FERANCE IN SYRIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS. IN ANY EVENT, GOI
CONTINUES TO PLAY IT COOL AND THERE ARE NOT YET ANY
INDICATIONS THAT IRAQ PLANS ANY MILITARY MOVE OR WOULD
EVEN WISH TO SEE REPTURE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

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